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ABSTRACT

This study examined the extent to which preparation in the educational leadership program at Southern Connecticut State University benefited graduates in carrying out their responsibilities as teachers. The sample consisted of program graduates from 1995-00 who had not assumed administrative roles but instead remained as teachers. Participants completed surveys that examined demographics and professional responsibilities. They also wrote in items indicating two additional ways in which their training in educational leadership had benefited them in their roles as teachers and whether they would recommend preparation in educational leadership for teachers who do not plan to become administrators. Results revealed several areas in which teachers used their training in educational leadership to carry out their responsibilities as teachers. These areas included reflection, collaboration, and leadership. Teachers were specific about the ways in which they utilized their knowledge, skills, and attitudes in their present role. Most said they would recommend educational leadership preparation for teachers who do not plan to become administrators because it would help them see the big picture, improve their teaching, keep them current, improve communication skills, and promote teacher leadership. (Contains 12 references.) (SM)

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Benefits of Educational Leadership Preparation to Teachers and Schools

By

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Benefits of Educational Leadership Preparation to Teachers and their Schools

Lystra M. Richardson, Ph.D.

Abstract

Currently there is a shortage of school administrators while large numbers educational leadership preparation program graduates remain as classroom teachers. The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which preparation in the educational leadership program at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) benefits graduates in carrying out their responsibilities as teachers. The sample consisted of program graduates from 1995 to 2000. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used.

Results indicate that program graduates who remain as teachers use their training to a great extent in carrying out their responsibilities as teachers. Conclusions are drawn regarding the benefits of leadership preparation to public schools. Recommendations are made regarding teacher leadership.

Introduction

That there is an increasing shortage of administrative candidates for leadership positions in schools is becoming commonplace today and was confirmed by the Educational Research Service (1998). In a recent study, Moore and Ditzhazy (2000) found several factors that account for graduates of administrative programs not entering the administrative ranks. These include increased time commitment, influence by outside groups into the everyday functioning of the principalship, and too much paperwork. Motivators found in the same study include: The desire to make a difference, personal and professional challenge, ability to initiate change, and the ability to have a positive impact on staff, students and community. In spite of these worthy motivators, the

problem persists and is becoming increasingly more so. The fact remains that thousands of teachers complete administrative preparation programs and do not enter the ranks of school administration.

This shortage is occurring in an era in which the roles of teachers and schools leaders are being reconceptualized based largely on collaboration. The Institute for Educational Leadership (2001) points out that teacher leadership is becoming an increasingly visible presence in schools and that it can contribute to improving the health and performance of schools. Teachers are often charged with making more decisions and this role requires use of leadership skills such as consensus, goal setting, negotiating, and conflict resolution (Rosenholtz, 1989). This decision-making role is new and somewhat uncomfortable for many teachers (Conley, 1999), and has implications for the professional development of teachers. Jacobs (1994) posited that formal preparation in educational leadership may serve as a legitimate, if not vital form of professional development for teachers and indicated and that this deserves expanded study.

This discussion on the administrative shortage and the reconceptualization of the role of teachers raises several questions, among them is: In what ways does the formal preparation in educational leadership benefit individual teachers and their schools?

The current era of education calls for collaborative leadership in which teachers are charged with making decisions, a role requiring leadership skills. Given that large numbers of teachers complete leadership preparation programs and do not enter the ranks of administration, this study was designed to determine the extent to which the educational leadership preparation program at Southern Connecticut State University benefits graduates in carrying out their responsibilities as teachers.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the extent to which participation in the educational leadership preparation program at Southern Connecticut State University benefits graduates who do not assume administrative roles in carrying out their responsibilities as teachers or their work in other non-administrative positions.

With just over 100 graduates annually, The Department of Educational Leadership at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) is the largest producer of certified school administrators in the State of Connecticut. In light of the aforementioned shortage of administrative candidates, the move toward teacher empowerment and leadership, and the continuing number of teachers completing formal administrative training, this study serves to explore the impact, if any, of this training on the schools, since a majority of teachers completing educational leadership training continue to work as teachers.

Conceptual Framework

The framework which serves as the conceptual context for this study in this paper was derived from the Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching (Connecticut State Department of Education, 1999) which delineates expectations and understandings that teachers must have about their own professional knowledge. Organized around three major areas: knowledge base, application of knowledge, and demonstration of professional responsibility, Connecticut's Common Core of Teaching (CCT) comprises an articulation of effective professional practices for teachers throughout their career continuum.

Specifically, this study relies on the teacher professional responsibility category which includes Reflection and Continuous Learning, Collaboration, and Leadership.

Reflection and continuous learning. The area of professional responsibility addresses the idea that teachers continually engage in self-evaluation of the effects of their choices and action on students and the community through means such as working with administrators and colleagues to explore student work and progress, to examine the effectiveness of instructional strategies, to identify school and program needs based on student data, and to ensure that the collective needs of the school are addressed. A second area of professional practice subsumed under reflection and continuous learning is that teachers seek out opportunities to grow professionally through means such as sharing practices with professional colleagues within the school or district; and enriching their knowledge about content, learners, pedagogy, technology and the U.S. public school system through the examination of professional literature, participation in professional organizations, attendance at professional development seminars or ongoing graduate-level course work.

Leadership and collaboration. This area of teacher professional responsibility is concerned with teachers serving as leaders in the school community through means such as working with colleagues to create a positive, collaborative school culture; working with colleagues and/or community leaders to secure community support for students and schools and actively promoting strategies that support the continuous improvement of student learning; and working with colleagues in addressing other identified needs of the school and student body. A second are of teacher responsibility is that teachers demonstrate a commitment to their students and a passion for improving their profession

through such means as bringing their enthusiasm about learning and about life into their daily work; and showing a commitment to developing the minds and characters of their students.

This set of competencies: Reflection and continuous learning, and leadership and collaboration, formed the basis for examining the extent to which preparation in educational leadership benefits program graduates who remain as teachers in carrying out these areas of their professional responsibility.

Methodology

This study sought to examine the extent to which preparation in an educational leadership program benefited graduates (who do not assume administrative roles but remain as teachers) in carrying out their responsibilities as teachers. This research question was answered using both qualitative and quantitative methodology. The quantitative method was in the form of a survey of program graduates. The qualitative data collection took the form of three open-ended questions and additional comments written in by participants. One of the purposes for combining methods is to add scope and breadth to the study (Creswell, 1994). Creswell noted that it is advantageous to a researcher to combine methods to better understand a concept being tested or explored. This study combined quantitative and qualitative methods in order to better understand participants perceptions of their professional responsibility as delineated in the CCT.

Sample

Program graduates of the Educational Leadership department at SCSU over a six-year period from 1995 to 2000 were mailed a three-part survey.

Instrument Development

Items for the survey were developed based on the professional responsibility, category of the CCT in the areas of reflection and continuous learning and leadership and collaboration.

Part 1 of the survey was comprised of demographic data. Part II consisted of seven questions developed broadly from the professional responsibility category, and directed to graduates who have assumed administrative positions. Part III of the survey comprised a set of 19 questions for those graduates who have remained as teachers. These questions were also derived from the professional responsibility category and were designed to capture the concepts embodied in the areas of reflection and continuous learning, and leadership and collaboration. The questions, on a four-point Likert scale ranging from "To a very great extent," to "Not at all," asked participants to indicate to what extent their training in the educational leadership preparation program has benefited them in carrying out their professional responsibilities in the areas of reflection and continuous learning, and leadership and collaboration.

The qualitative aspect of the study comprised three write in items in which participants were asked to indicate two additional ways in which their training in educational leadership benefited them in their roles as teachers. The third item asked "Would you recommend preparation in educational leadership for teachers who do not plan to become administrators? Why? or Why not?"

Data Collection

A total of 600 surveys were mailed yielding 170 usable returns for a 28% rate of return. Of this total 110 indicated they were teachers and 60 administrators or other personnel.

Data Analysis

After segregating the data by respondent title. The data reported by administrators and other non-teaching personnel (n=60) were held for separate analysis. Data reported by teachers (n = 110) were analyzed using SPSS to determine frequency of responses and percentages to allow for comparison of data. A series of statistical analyses were conducted including factor analysis, means, t-tests, and one-way ANOVA. Because it was a new instrument, a factor analysis was conducted to examine the factors for empirical support for the categories as described in the CCT and specified a priori. Means were examined for the impact of leadership preparation training on the categories. Correlations were run to determine the relationship, if any, between year of graduation and teacher engagement in professional responsibilities. A t-test was conducted to examine for gender differences, and an ANOVA was conducted to determine whether there were any significant differences among the five age groupings.

The qualitative data collected through the three write-in items were coded and analyzed using the constant comparative method of quantitative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Each response was coded into as many categories as possible. Some categories were constructed by the researcher as they emerged from the data, and some categories were taken from the literature on teacher responsibility. The third question, "Would you recommend preparation in educational leadership for teachers who do not

plan to become administrators was analyzed by frequency of yeses or nos with each explanation of why or why not coded using the constant comparative method of analysis.

Limitations

This exploratory study was limited in at least three ways. First, population validity is reduced when generalizing to the same set of subjects at another time or to similar population in another area, or who have graduated from other teacher preparation programs. Generalizability, then is minimized. Second, while the study explored teacher responsibility, as delineated in the CCT, the exploration was limited to two areas reflection and continuous learning, and leadership and collaboration. Third, this study was not intended to study the nature of teacher leadership but was specifically concerned with exploring the ways in which program graduates who remain as teachers use their knowledge in carrying out their professional responsibility in two areas: Reflection and continuous learning, and leadership and collaboration.

Results

Quantitative

The factor analysis revealed four interpretable factors as shown in Table I. This analysis indicated 17 of the 18 items clustering around four factors: Reflection, collaboration/professional development, collaboration/problem solving, and leadership with reliabilities ranging from .75 to .83. One item, #15 "Contributing to the knowledge base of the profession," emerged as a separate construct.

An examination of the means which ranged from 2.50 to 2.93 (see Table 1) shows that based on teacher report leadership preparation has a great impact on reflection, collaboration, and to a lesser extent on leadership. While these results provide

some empirical support for the categories as described in the CCT, the study also revealed a distinction in the collaboration variable, not made in the CCT. This result which merits comment is the clustering of items into two areas of collaboration: Professional development and problem solving.

On close examination of the data it was observed that items clustered separately into what could be described as collaborating for professional development activities and collaborating for problem solving. The items that clustered into collaboration for professional development were: Item #8: Sharing practices with professional colleagues; item #10: Enriching my knowledge base by examining professional literature, participating in organizations and attending professional development seminars; item #14: Working on my own to improve the overall learning environment of the school; item #16: Sharing experiences and knowledge with colleagues and school administrators; and item # 18: Following a professional code of ethics that govern educational practice.

Those items clustering to form collaboration for problem solving were: Item #5: Working with colleagues to examine the effectiveness of instructional strategies; item #6: Working with colleagues to identify school and program needs based on student data; and item #7: Working with colleagues to ensure the collective needs of the school are addressed. In light of the items, the variable names were derived from the nature of the items that formed the two clusters.

Table 1 here

Mean Scores and Reliabilities of Teacher Responsibility Variables.

As is evident in Table I reflection, collaboration/professional development and collaboration/problem solving each garnered means close to 3.0 indicating that based on the four-point Likert scale, preparation in educational leadership benefited respondents in carrying out their professional responsibility in these areas to a great extent. Leadership, with a means of 2.50 indicates preparation only sometimes impacted teacher responsibility in this category.

Whereas leadership preparation was shown to have some impact on teacher collaboration and reflection, based on teacher report, preparation is shown to have the lowest impact on the area of teacher responsibility dealing with leadership in external relations. Examination of frequencies revealed that Item #16 "Sharing experiences and knowledge with colleagues and school administrators; and item #17 "Working to promote strategies for continuous improvement of student learning" were perceived to have the greatest impact. Item 13, "Fostering relationships with businesses and agencies in the larger community," had the lowest impact with item 12, "Involving families of students in the education of their children" perceived as having the second lowest impact.

Other results indicated that there was no correlation between year of graduation and teacher engagement in professional responsibilities as defined by the four cluster variables. Similarly, a two-tailed t-test showed no significant gender differences on these variables. And, a one-way ANOVA comparing means among the five age groupings (under 35; 35 – 45; 46 - 55; 56 - 65; and over 65) did not reveal any significant difference among these variables. It appeared that none of the demographic variables were significant in accounting for differences in teachers assuming professional responsibility in the variables under consideration. While initial correlation and ANOVA

analyses did not reveal significant differences for year of graduation, the ANOVA indicated a possible difference in the reflection variable by year of graduation with the variable reflection approaching significance at .056. This led to a visual examination of the means by way of a bar graph (see figure 1) which revealed that the relationship between the year of graduation and the professional responsibility variables was curvilinear, not linear, hence the lack of correlational significance.

Figure 1 here

Comparison in Professional Responsibility by Year of Graduation

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This visual examination revealed that the assumption of professional responsibility was declining from 1995 to 1998. The data indicated that these teachers were assuming less and less professional responsibility. However, from 1999-2000 there was a rise in graduates assuming professional responsibility with a marked improvement from the year 2000 graduates for three of the four variables, that is, all except leadership.

The qualitative aspect of the study has shed further light on the nature of teacher responsibility and indicates that graduates who have remained as teachers use their training in key areas of their professional responsibility including reflection, collaboration and leadership.

Quantitative

In addition to the quantitative items on the survey, teachers were asked two open-ended, qualitative questions: 1). List other ways in which your preparation in educational leadership benefits you in carrying out your professional responsibilities as a teacher.

And 2) would you recommend preparation in educational leadership for teachers who do not plan on becoming administrators? These two items yielded an interesting array of responses that together identified a set of skills, attitudes and knowledge that teachers found to be useful in their present role. Table 2 shows categorization of attitudes, skills and knowledge gained in the educational leadership preparation program and utilized as teachers.

Table 2 here

Additional Benefits of Educational Leadership Preparation

Responses to the first question indicate that teachers utilize skills they gained in the program in curriculum work, working on teams and committees, fostering collegiality and collaboration, and facilitating change in their department as shown in Table 2. The knowledge base helps them to view life in school issues more globally, gain better understanding of school law, provides another objective lens to assess instructional decisions, understand and appreciate the difficult role of the administrator, become professional development facilitator, deal more effectively with displeased parents and students, better understanding of the politics in schools, and as one teacher so aptly put it, "Helped me better understand problems administrators face and be more effective in helping administration when needed."

Attitudes included, feeling confident and knowledgeable, better prepared to face daily challenges, working differently with groups of professionals, maintaining a professional attitude after 30 years, remaining a caring open-minded teacher to all

students, and as one teacher responded, "I understand the impossible, stress-filled job done by my principal and I take care to give constructive criticism to this poor man."

In response to the second question, "would you recommend preparation in educational leadership for teachers who do not plan on becoming administrators? the majority of respondents indicated they would recommend preparation in educational leadership for teachers who do not plan on becoming administrators, and gave several specific reasons for their recommendation. These could be classified in five major categories: Seeing the big picture, improving teaching, keeping teachers current, improving communication skills, and promoting teacher leaders as shown in Table 2. A few (n=3) respondents who indicated they would not recommend preparation in educational leadership gave the following reasons: "Overall program prepares you to be an administrator not a better teacher. Although I have gained from my experience, it teachers people management skills, prioritizing, and how to budget."
"Not if the teachers took opportunity away from those who truly want to be administrators. All my teaching needs would not be met. I feel it is far more beneficial for teachers to gain additional expertise in their given field." "Since most of the coursework is geared toward administration it provides only secondarily important information which overloaded teachers do not need."

Conclusions

Overall results of this study revealed several areas of teacher responsibility in which teachers use their preparation in educational leadership. However, while factor analysis revealed four interpretable factors and a single-item as a separate construct, it should be noted that while continuous learning did not emerge as an identifiable factor,

the item which emerged as a separate construct, item #15 "Contributing to the knowledge base of the profession," may be indicative of continuous learning. Another similar item, #10 "Enriching my knowledge base by examining professional literature, participating in professional organizations, and attending professional development seminars," loaded with the collaboration/professional development factor. This could be the result of including too many concepts within the item. The concepts of examining professional literature, is different from participating in professional organizations, and from attending professional development seminars. In retrospect, these should have comprised three separate items on the survey. Nonetheless, results indicate several areas of teacher responsibility in which teachers utilize their preparation in educational leadership, and the qualitative aspect of the study adds scope and breadth to the study.

Reflection

The study shows that educational leadership training does benefit teachers to some extent in critically analyzing their teaching, examining curriculum plans and making instructional decisions, as well as in assessing student progress. According to the data in Figure I from 1998 through 2000 shows an increase in the impact of educational leadership preparation on teacher reflection. This may be a result of programmatic changes in the department's curriculum which begun to focus on reflective practice.

Collaboration

The notion of two forms of collaboration was a surprising finding since the CCT did not necessarily describe any differences in collaboration. However a further review of literature revealed two studies Young (1993) and Johnston (1994) both of which indicated that teachers found it easier to collaborate when dealing with broader concerns

than with concerns related to classrooms. Although this present study does not reveal differing levels of involvement between the two types of collaboration, it does confirm the two types of collaboration: One in which problem solving occurs; the other collaboration for teacher growth or professional development. This may merit further study.

The current standards-based system of education demands collaborative leadership with teachers assuming teacher leadership roles. This raises several questions: Where do teachers learn to become leaders? What is teacher leadership, and how does one foster it? Due to the significant numbers of teachers who undergo school leadership training and remain as teachers, it would be important, and practical to incorporate training on the dimensions of teacher leadership as a prominent part of these programs. In this way, whether graduates become administrators or remain as teachers (as significant numbers do) they will have had occasion to learn about teacher leadership and be better equipped to engage in collaborative leadership. And, as Jacobs (1994) posited formal preparation in educational leadership may indeed serve as a legitimate, if not vital form of professional development for teachers.

Leadership

An examination of the leadership variable which garnered lowest mean score or showed little use among teachers merits comment. Several factors in the school environment may account for this. First it is possible that teachers do not get the opportunity to exercise leadership. Second teachers may not make any distinction between their classroom work and other responsibilities i.e. they may define leadership as solely the principal's role etc.

Although the notion of teachers as instructional leaders is not new, it is currently in the forefront of education reform. According to Fessler & Ungaretti (1994) the current emphasis is to be on promoting the professionalization of all teachers, yet little information is provided on training for teachers as instructional leaders. If this, then, is the case, it means that teachers will be expected to contribute meaningfully and substantively to the leadership of the school, and the effective development of teachers as leaders should be a substantial investment for school districts. Leadership skills are for the most part learned skills which develop over time.

Results of this study highlights the need for, and reveal some insights into the nature of the training teachers would need to enable them to carry out their professional responsibilities as articulated by the State of Connecticut. Barth (2001) asserted that teacher leadership is about mobilizing the still largely untapped attributes of teachers working toward real collaboration in a locally tailored kind of shared leadership. It should be noted that the leadership variable was the area in which respondents reported using their training the least. It could be surmised that educational leadership programs prepare students to be school leaders in the role of principal rather than teacher. In which case graduates may not be equipped with the knowledge, skills, or attitudes to be effective teacher leaders. Conversely, it may be that there are limited opportunities to lead or that teachers define leadership differently. For example, teachers may not consider committee work as leadership.

With the trend toward teacher leadership, several critical issues come to the fore. Focus needs to be placed not only on clearly defining teacher leadership, but on identifying the nature of the training and support teachers need to be effective leaders.

Moreover, the issue of occasions to learn teacher leadership must be addressed in all leadership preparation programs, if those who become leaders are to foster it, and if teachers are to practice it. Additionally, it would be useful for school leaders to consider ways in which they can tap into and utilize the knowledge base and expertise of teachers within their schools who are trained in educational leadership.

The comparison by year of graduation (Figure 1) indicates a change of some sort that impacted perceptions of how the leadership preparation program benefits graduates in their teaching responsibilities particularly in the areas of reflection and both forms of collaboration. With a 50 percent staff turnover in 1998, a notable change in the program was a focus on reflective practice in which students were instructed to explore implications for practice in most of their coursework. This may in some way help to account for the result which showed greater teacher engagement in professional responsibility from the year 2000 graduates. This may, in part be due to program changes, and/or perhaps in part due to the increase in various forms of site-based management in Connecticut schools. The implication here is that the degree of use to which program graduates who remain as teachers put their knowledge and skills to work in their professional responsibility may be impacted by the nature of the leadership training program they receive. This could have implications for all school leadership training programs.

Additional Benefits

Teachers were specific about the ways in which they utilize their knowledge, skills and attitudes in their present role. While about one percent of the respondents did not necessarily see a connection between teaching and leading schools, more than two-

thirds of the respondents said they would recommend educational leadership preparation for teachers who do not plan to enter the ranks of administration. The benefits were variously phrased as: Expanding one's knowledge base, staying current, changing one's perspective, seeing the big picture, improving one's communication skills, appreciation of administrators, improving one's teaching, and better positioned for teacher leadership.

Seeing the big picture was the most frequent response. Teachers noted that prospective students will be able to see another side of education, become more insightful, better understand school politics and the school change process, gain insights on improving the school community, and better understand leadership decision-making and practices. Among the insightful comments was, "There is great value in seeing the overall picture of a school and a school system that you don't see as a classroom teacher. The educational leadership program helps in that way. You become more aware of the mechanics of school politics and leadership. It breaks you out of the smaller classroom box and opens you up to greater awareness of the influences which affect your teaching. You stay competitive in learning strategies and can network with others who believe in strong leadership and effective teaching." Another explanation was, "It gives you a better understanding of how administrators in your building are making the decisions they do, and implementing the strategies they do."

Improving teaching followed as the second most frequently mentioned reason for recommending teachers for preparation in educational leadership. The reasons included: Nice background and understanding in curriculum and school culture, effective teaching practice, better understanding about the process of teaching and learning, helps to make the school better and the profession better, courses in curriculum and effective teaching

makes one a better teacher and more valuable to my students, provides background and training to become a more reflective teacher and therefore more effective. "It broadens the scope of practice, and helps you understand teaching better. It enhances your knowledge of how to perform as a professional, enables you to assess curriculum, and it provides non-subjective perspectives which help to further the growth and learning of your students," was a comment that effectively summed up the program's impact on teaching.

Keeping teachers current and improved communication skills were also identified as specific ways in which teachers gain value from their leadership preparation. "It's a real eye opener," one graduate wrote. Specifically they mentioned that it helps keep them abreast of current trends in education, that a class on relationships and handling situations helps in everyday situations, and, that it helps develop interpersonal skills and an overall awareness of the educational process.

Promoting teacher leaders was also mentioned. One graduate succinctly noted she would recommend the educational leadership preparation program, "Because teachers can be the most important educational leaders in a school." Other poignant comments included, "The program offers strategies that can be used by teachers, counselors, or administrators. I have been invigorated by the program. The program helps with problem solving and how to be a change agent." Another reported, "Since completing my sixth year I have taken on more of a leadership role within the visual arts department. I have mentored new teachers, taken student teachers and I am currently creating assessment tools for the department."

It may be inferred from the few respondents who stated they would not recommend educational leadership preparation for teachers, that while the concerns are valid, these respondents may indicate a lack of understanding of the connections between teaching and leading or be oblivious to the current call for collaboration, or are may be comfortable with their traditional role. Having been socialized to be autonomous and now being asked to build community and engage in leadership could be a difficult shift for some teachers.

Overall, preparation in educational leadership does appear to benefit teachers in carrying out their responsibilities. While I am not advocating that educational leadership preparation programs redesign their programs solely to meet the needs of teacher leaders, due to the significant numbers of teachers who undergo school leadership training and remain as teachers, it may be prudent and practical to incorporate training on the dimensions of teacher leadership as a prominent part of these programs. In this way, whether graduates become administrators or remain as teachers, as significant numbers do, they will have had occasion to learn about teacher leadership and be better equipped to engage in collaborative leadership. And, as Jacobs (1994) posited formal preparation in educational leadership may indeed serve as a legitimate, if not vital form of professional development for teachers.

The overriding conclusion here is that rather than casting teachers in decision-making roles without preparation, there is a need to develop processes through which teachers can acquire the skills necessary to understand the broader context of public schooling, and to develop leadership skills and attitudes that would engender a meaningful and substantive teacher leadership role.

Recommendations

This study holds implications for future research. One such implication for future research is updating and revising the instrument. Updating would include incorporating the third area of teacher responsibility on the CCT termed professional and ethical practice. This will provide data on the full range of teacher responsibilities as delineated in the CCT. Additionally, the major findings from the qualitative aspect of the study should be examined further to help determine the nature of teacher leadership.

Two areas of significance emerge from this exploratory study. First, some value of this work lies in its potential to highlight the need for and possibly nature of the training teachers would need to enable them to carry out their professional responsibilities as articulated by the State of Connecticut. Barth (2001) asserts that teacher leadership is about mobilizing the still largely untapped attributes of teachers working toward real collaboration in a locally tailored kind of shared leadership. While this study was limited to exploring the extent to which training in educational leadership benefits those who remain teachers in carrying out their professional responsibilities in the areas of reflection, collaboration, and leadership, it should be noted that the leadership variable was the area in which respondents reported using their training the least. Several conclusions may be drawn from this. Many program graduates may not have the opportunity to lead; school leaders may not be open to shared/collaborative leadership. It could also be surmised that educational leadership programs prepare students to be school leaders in the sense of the principalship as opposed to being teacher leaders. In which case graduates may not be equipped with the knowledge, skills, or attitudes to be effective teacher leaders.

With the trend toward teacher leadership, in light of this current study, several critical issues come to the fore. Focus needs to be placed not only on clearly defining teacher leadership, but identifying the nature of the training and support teachers need to be effective leaders. Moreover, the issue of occasions to learn teacher leadership must be addressed in all leadership preparation programs, if leaders are to foster it, and if teachers are to practice it.

This becomes increasingly important in light of two emerging issues in public education. The first is that today leadership in schools is not vested in any one person. School leadership is being conceptualized as a broader base to include teacher leaders. The second issue relates to the questions being raised as to whether educational leadership programs add value to the field of education. Hence, consideration should be given to how departments of educational leadership could design their curricula to address both certification requirements and leadership preparation for leaders without positional authority i.e. teacher leaders, thereby equipping teachers to lead and explicitly adding value to the field of education.

Table I
Mean Scores and Reliabilities of Teacher Responsibility Variables

Teacher Responsibility Variable	Mean	Reliability
Reflection	2.91	.83
Collaboration/Professional Development	2.93	.77
Collaboration/Problem Solving	2.92	.77
Leadership	2.50	.75

Figure 1

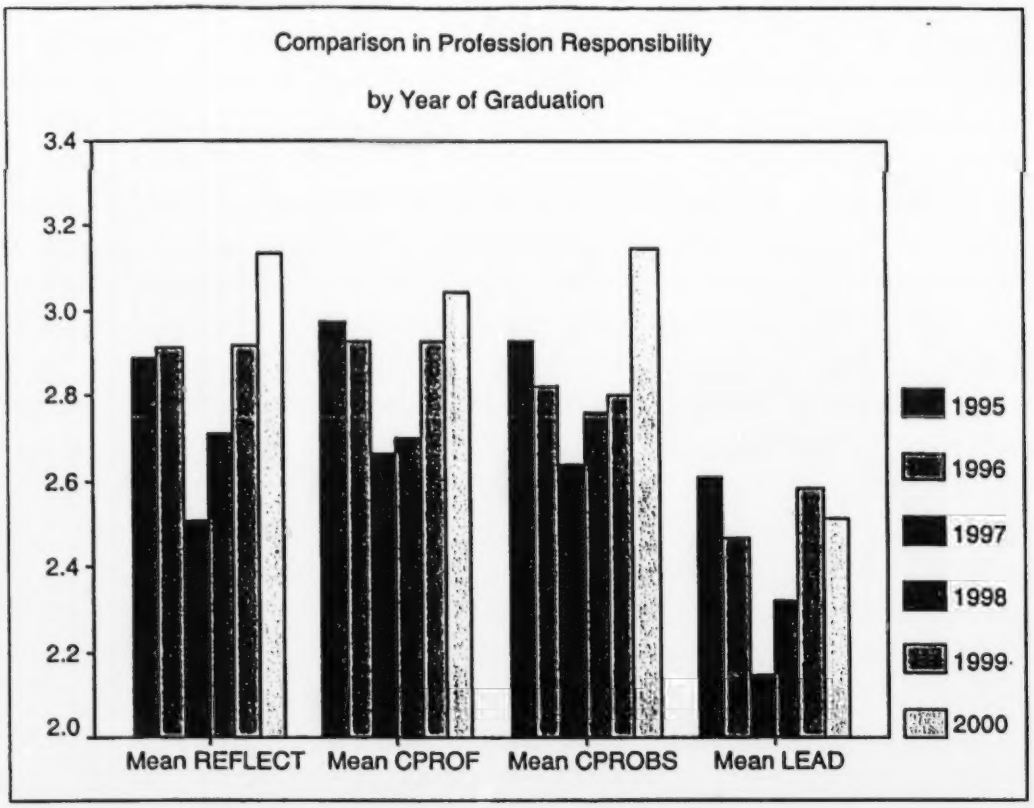
Comparison in Profession Responsibility
by Year of Graduation
3.4
3.2
3.0
2.8
2.6
2.4
2.2
2.0
Mean REFLECT
Mean CPROF
Mean CPROBS
Mean LEAD
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000

Table 2

List of Additional Benefits of Preparation in Educational Leadership

Knowledge & Skills	Attitudes
Development of global perspective	Increased confidence
Improved teaching	
Fostering collegiality	More professional attitude
More involved in teams and committees	Empathy toward to administrators
Facilitating change	Better prepared to deal with parents
Greater involvement in curriculum work	Better prepared to deal with students
Understanding school law	
Assessing instructional decisions	
Understanding politics	

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